

INFORMATION TRANSMITTAL

DATE: January 2, 2015
TO: All DCFS and POS Child Welfare Staff and Supervisors
FROM: Bobbie Gregg, Acting Director *Bobbie Gregg*
SUBJECT: 2015 Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Scholarship Program

LAST DATE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED: MARCH 31, 2015
ANNOUNCEMENT OF SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS: MAY 1, 2015

The purpose of this information transmittal is to announce the Department is currently accepting applications for the 2015 Department of Children and Family Services Scholarship Program.

The DCFS Scholarship Program provides a minimum of 53 scholarships each year, four of which are awarded to children of veterans. Youth who the Department has court-ordered legal responsibility for, youth who aged out of the Department's care at age 18 or older, youth that the Department had legal responsibility for prior to the youth's adoption being finalized, or youth that are in the Subsidized Guardianship or KinGap Program are eligible to apply for a DCFS Scholarship. Scholarship recipients receive up to five consecutive years of tuition and academic fee waivers to be used at participating Illinois state community colleges and universities, a monthly grant and a medical card. Youth that graduated from high school in previous years or youth that are currently enrolled in college are eligible to apply for a Department scholarship, as long as they will be under the age of 21 on 3/31/15.

BENEFITS

Scholarship recipients will receive a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees if they attend their local Illinois state community college or any of the following Illinois state universities and if the student does not have a tuition and fee scholarship from another source.

Chicago State University
Western Illinois University
University of Illinois

Eastern Illinois University
Illinois State University
Southern Illinois University

Governors State University
Northeastern Illinois University
Northern Illinois University

Note: Tuition and fee waivers are provided only to scholarship recipients that attend an Illinois state community college or university. Scholarship recipients that attend private Illinois or out-of-state colleges or universities do not receive tuition and fee waivers.

All scholarship recipients receive a monthly grant of \$511 regardless of whether they attend an Illinois state community college or university. The grant is effective the first day of school and will terminate at the end of the academic year unless the recipient attends summer school and maintains an academic load of six credit hours or participates in a college or university approved summer internship program. Youth that choose not to attend summer school or participate in an approved internship program will continue to receive their grant payments through the summer months if the Department has guardianship of the youth or the Department's guardianship of the youth was terminated at age 21 after the youth entered the scholarship program, are registered to attend a post-secondary program for the upcoming fall semester, earned a minimum of a 2.0 GPA for the previous spring semester, and the youth is in compliance with all other requirements of the Scholarship program.

Scholarships DO NOT cover room, board, dormitory fees, other non-academic fees or college/university fines. Students are **STRONGLY** encouraged to use their monthly grant in combination with other scholarships, grants, benefits or loans to pay these expenses. Information concerning any of the following sources of educational funding may be obtained from high school counselors or college/university financial aid officers.

Pell or MAP Grants
Student loans
Basic Education Grant
Supplemental Education Grant
Work Study

Illinois State Scholarship Commission Grants
National Defense Student Loans
Social Security
Veteran's Benefits

Eligibility Requirements

Department scholarship applicants must:

- Be at least 16 years of age and under 21 years of age on the scholarship application deadline date of March 31, 2015;
- Have earned a high school diploma from an accredited institution, or a General Education Development (GED) certificate/diploma, or met the state criteria for high school graduation before the start of the school year for which they are applying for the scholarship.; and
- The Department must have court-ordered legal guardianship for the applicant, the applicant must have aged out of the Department's care at age 18 or older, the Department must have had legal guardianship for the applicant prior to the adoption being finalized, or the applicant must be in the Subsidized Guardianship or KinGap Program.

Application

Scholarship applicants are required to submit their applications to the Office of Education and Transition Services (OETS) **no later than March 31, 2015**. Applications postmarked after that date will not be eligible for consideration. Incomplete applications will be ineligible for consideration and will be returned to the applicant. If time permits, the applicant can resubmit the complete application packet. Applications submitted by facsimile will be ineligible for consideration.

It is mandatory that scholarship application packet contain the following documents. All documents must come together in one package.

- A completed **CFS-438, DCFS Scholarship Program Student Application**;
- The applicant's transcript of high school grades or copy of GED;
- The applicant's ACT or SAT test scores (attach a copy of the score report);
- College transcript (if attending college);
- Three letters of recommendation from persons unrelated to the applicant; and
- Documentation of the applicant's legal relationship with the Department. This must be attached to the application to expedite confirmation of this eligibility requirement.

The **CFS-438, DCFS Scholarship Program Student Application**, may be obtained from:

- Any Department Regional office;
- The Department website at www.state.il.us/dcfs (Click on "forms" at the left side of the screen);
- The Department's Youth In Care website at www.youthincare.illinois.gov (Click on "Education" page, then "Youth in Scholarship");
- The Department Intranet site (Click on resource link, download and then CFS forms); or
- Telephone 217 557-2689 (Springfield) or 312 814-5959 (Chicago)

Send completed scholarship applications to:

Office of Education and Transition Services
Attn: DCFS Scholarship Program
Department of Children and Family Services
406 E Monroe, Station #22
Springfield, IL 62701

Selection of Scholarship Recipients

Applicants that do not meet the eligibility criteria for the scholarship program or do not meet the application deadline will not be considered. Scholarship recipients will be selected on the basis of their scholastic record and aptitude, community and extracurricular activities, and interest in higher education. The Scholarship Awards Selection Committee will meet in April to select the scholarship recipients for the year 2015. Applicants will be notified by mail of the committee's decisions by May 1, 2015.

Living Arrangements for Scholarship Recipients Under the Department's Care

Permanency workers for scholarship recipients shall establish a living arrangement plan with their scholarship students prior to the beginning of the school year. Scholarship recipients may not live in a Department funded placement while receiving monthly grant payments under the Scholarship Program. However, Department funded placements may be available to the youth under DCFS guardianship during extended academic breaks and summers. Youth also have the option of remaining in their current paid placement and not receive the monthly Scholarship grant payment. Youth in DCFS care may also participate in the Employment Incentive Program or be involved with an internship program during the summer.

Questions

Questions concerning the Department of Children and Family Services Scholarship Program may be directed to either of the following OETS offices.

Springfield 217-557-2689
Chicago 312-814-5959

Please share the attached scholarship program information sheet with all potential scholarship applicants.

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Pat Quinn
Governor



Bobbie Gregg
Acting Director

DATE: January 2, 2015

TO: Scholarship Applicants

FROM: DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services

SUBJECT: 2015 DCFS Scholarship Application Process

Thank you for your interest in the annual Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Scholarship Program. Enclosed you will find the application you need to apply for this merit-based scholarship. Please note that even if you are currently enrolled in college we still need a copy of your high school transcript, as well as, verification of your ACT/SAT scores, in addition to your college transcripts.

DCFS awards a minimum of 53 scholarships annually. The scholarship package includes a full tuition and mandatory fee waiver to a state-supported public school in Illinois (in-district community college or state university), a monthly grant payment, and a medical card. Last year there were approximately 300 applicants. For that reason, we strongly urge you to look into other forms of financial assistance for college. If you have not already completed the Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA) at www.fafsa.ed.gov you should do so as soon as possible. It is through that application process that you are able to get grant assistance, such as the Illinois MAP grant and/or the federal Pell grant. You are also encouraged to explore websites, such as www.ISAC.org, www.fastweb.com, www.whatsnextillinois.org, www.studentaid.ed.gov, www.scholarshipamerica.org, www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator or www.fc2success.org where you may find other scholarship or grant programs that you can apply for.

We would also like to offer just a couple of helpful hints as you complete your scholarship application packet:

1. Be sure to proofread your personal essay. There are some things that "spell-check" just will not catch, so be sure to proofread it yourself, as well as asking someone else to do the same. The essay should emphasize your perseverance to excel, obstacles you have overcome in order to do so, and how you will use this scholarship to its fullest benefit to successfully earn a post secondary degree.
2. Your three letters of recommendation should come from individuals who know you well, who are not family members, and can provide a brief description of your personal strengths, academic abilities and/or work performance.
3. Your complete application packet must be postmarked by 5:00 pm on March 31, 2015. The packet must include the application (completely filled out and be sure to sign it), your personal essay, high school transcript, college transcript (if applicable), verification of your ACT or SAT scores, three letters of recommendation, and verification of your relationship with the Department of Children and Family Services. If any of these items are missing, your application will not be scored and will be returned to you.

406 E. Monroe, Station #22 • Springfield, Illinois 62701
217-557-2689 • 217-557-5796 / Fax
www.DCFS.illinois.gov; www.youthincare.illinois.gov